

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](https://archiveofourown.org/works/10676688) at
<http://download.archiveofourown.org/works/10676688>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/F
Fandom:	Overwatch (Video Game)
Relationship:	Fareeha "Pharah" Amari/Angela "Mercy" Ziegler
Character:	Fareeha "Pharah" Amari , Angela "Mercy" Ziegler , Lena "Tracer" Oxtan , Winston (Overwatch) , Reinhardt Wilhelm
Additional Tags:	Pharmercy , Soulmates AU , i couldnt resist okay they are just too precious , some ever so slightly angsty but ever so greatly fluffy goodness , its that skin mark au thing y'know
Stats:	Published: 2017-04-19 Words: 7108

Afterglow

by [dahyun](#)

Summary

And it's generic, it could mean anything. But she wants so much for the sun on her skin to mean Fareeha, to mean the warm pumping of her blood through her veins when she's with her, the radiant shine of her smile, the burning heat of Fareeha's hand in hers.

She is six years old, the first time she asks her father to tell her about soulmates.

The sky is overcast, and every surface in the room seems to glow in the weak sunlight, silvery white in the late afternoon. The hair crowning her father's head is grey in some parts, too, though she is too young to really understand why; she only thinks that he looks a little like an angel with his chrome halo, almost luminescent in the light.

"Some people," he begins, propping her up in his lap, "say it's a bit like becoming aware of the pain from a wound you didn't know you had. Like suddenly realising there's a half of you that was missing."

Angela still remembers that day now, remembers the way she felt, the way she sat in awe of the words coming out of his mouth, and sometimes wonders how she could ever have missed how wistful he sounded, as if he'd lost the sensation a long time ago, or had never felt it before. She'd only half understood his explanation when she heard it then, and Angela still doesn't think she really knows what he meant. You're supposed to know from the beginning, when you get your mark, that someone out there is waiting for you, waiting to make you whole.

And how does it make sense, that it should hurt more after you've found your soulmate.

When Angela is eight years old, the sun burns itself into the skin on the inside of her wrist.

The moment it happens is totally unremarkable. The lamp on her desk shines brightly, the sky inky black outside the window in her bedroom. Downstairs, her parents murmur quietly, the house still for once as her newborn brother sleeps in their arms. Angela is scribbling in her notebook, her words, sprawling and loopy even then, forming the beginnings of a poem; something inconsequential, about little rabbits that live on a farm.

Kaya at school got her mark last week, brandishing her wrist proudly, the little apple on it bright and obvious. Their teacher had forgone their usual schedule and lectured them on the meanings of certain marks.

"There are many different symbols that your marks can take on," Ms. Kimble had said, gesturing to the soft skin of her own wrist, where a little book was visible. The other children sat with their chins propped on their hands, eyes blinking sleepily. They weren't like Angela; they didn't know any better. "Although your mark can be identical to another person's, they can mean different things to different people." Angela nodded along with every word.

People almost always start getting marks when they're eleven or twelve, except for a couple exceptions; her mother got her miniature bulleted list when she was six, and some people don't get them until much later. Angela would know, she's read all about it.

Anyway, it isn't a surprise. She isn't one to be shown up, and she's always known what she wants. Angela has been ready for this since that late afternoon in her father's study, the day she committed his words to memory. So even though she's about four years too early, she isn't taken by surprise. Angela is sitting there one moment, writing her poem, when pain flares in her wrist, white-hot, as if a piece of the sun really did find its home in her skin, and then she has her mark the next.

Her heart flutters excitedly like a hummingbird's wings, and she carefully sets her pencil crayon down, smoothing out the pages in front of her, before turning the inside of her left wrist towards her.

She's not surprised, no, but she's disappointed, sort of; it's not exactly what she was expecting. A crown, maybe, a sword, a knight in shining armour. A castle or palace, a carriage, a fleur-de-lis. The sun is all but ordinary in comparison to her fantasies. The sun is nothing to write home about. The sun, well.

It's a bit of a letdown, really.

Angela doesn't ever stop obsessing over soulmates and the mark on her wrist, but she doesn't exactly fixate on them, either. She focuses more on her writing and studies, eventually the poems that once found root in fairytale endings and fated romance turn into essays, countless pages of scientific theory decorating her desk in an organised chaos.

She imagines that somewhere out there, someone's mark, previously a line of poetry or a pen, transforms into a scalpel, or a stethoscope. There's never been a definite instance of someone's mark changing that has been recorded in the past, but Angela figures her soulmate's could be the first, and she's kind of still holding out for her own to change.

At eleven years old, Angela gets her first taste of the real world when her parents pass away, taken by a war Angela swears to never play a part in. The world grows a little darker that day, but she takes the pain, the loss, the sadness in her stride. And so she works harder, trying to be more special than her parents always assured her she was.

When she turns fourteen, she moves with her grandparents to the capital of Bern, and the changes that would rile any other teenager barely even register in her mind. Angela gets her first boyfriend a few months later, fully aware that he isn't the sun etched onto her wrist, and she isn't the pink diamond he makes her out to be.

In the summer before she turns sixteen, she gets accepted into the country's most prestigious medical school, and that's where it really takes off.

Sixteen and young and not really sure of anything yet, except that she needs to be different and unique and special, and that the mark on her wrist is none of those things, she decides to keep it hidden and the little sun becomes nothing short of a mystery to those who ask.

It is the single best, and worst, decision of her life.

She has a band-aid on her wrist.

Never mind the sun on Angela's, hers is a medical insignia, and Angela has always believed in fairytales and fate. She thinks it's meant to be, thinks that this girl being in Angela's study group is a kind of destiny. And besides, the girl has blonde hair that shines like the sun, and wasn't that enough.

Later, Angela writes a poem for the first time in years, and it's a shame, that it has to be an apology.

Years pass, and it's a call from Overwatch that drags her out of her room long enough for Angela to forget what had been weighing her down for so long in the first place. The sun etched into her

skin is nothing but a blur in the back of her mind, covered by a catsuit and armour as she works hard to right the wrongs of the world, to save the lives of the innocent; hundreds, thousands, but it isn't enough, it'll never be enough.

Angela spends a lot more time with her grandparents than she used to, comes home to her grandmother sometimes to cry on her shoulder when the harshness of the world gets to be too much, or just to collapse in her grandfather's arms, frailer now than she remembers them.

The sun on her wrist becomes the bane of her existence. These days she hates it more than anything in the world, and she yearns to be able to watch her parents like she used to, to witness the love they have for each other; to restore her faith in the system.

Except; and she cries when she realises, whilst re-watching an old home video of their family of four on a beach holiday one summer; like it used to be, she catches them eyeing the marks on every person they pass, the same as her.

Some days she steps away from everything, and just remembers the way it was before. Before she started caring about the marks. Before she knew what she wanted to do with her life.

It's bittersweet, because that nostalgic, blissful oblivion is like a calming balm on her stress and her nerves, cool and sweet relief like her mother's lemonade on a hot summer's day. Once, Angela's life was only miracles and magic, and fairytales that end perfectly; petty competitions with her brother, and walking in between the towering figures of her parents, one hand in each of theirs. Once, she was young and naive, and ignorant of that wistful note in her father's voice, of the way her mother clutches the mark on her wrist to her heart sometimes, like she's protecting it, or herself, or maybe both. Once upon a time, no one cared who Angela was, and not until she stepped into the limelight that Overwatch had brought with it, did Angela ever realise she didn't either, not anymore.

And it brings her to tears, realising that it's just not enough, and it won't ever be enough. Angela left that quiet life years ago, abandoned it the moment she moved to Bern, her passion and gift with medicine spurring her ventures; the moment she discovered something she loved more than life itself. And she would have to love it more than life, or else it would never be worth it.

So, sweet and lovely as five-year-old Angela was, her wrist pale and bare, that life would be settling for less; settling for a finished puzzle that isn't quite right, where that one piece is just a shade too light, doesn't fit the way it really should.

Sometimes, she thinks she wants a little more than her share of what the world has to offer her; occupies a bit more room than she's been allotted. But she figures it's fair, given how much of herself she gives up in return.

After Overwatch disbands, it gets a little easier. The lights are a little less harsh, the shouts a little less shrill. Like the world around her was once a blazing wildfire on all sides, and it's calmer now

than it was somehow, softer and brighter. Warmer.

Which is why it is with great reluctance that when she receives a message from Winston in the early hours of a Tuesday morning many years later; calling for the reforming of Overwatch, that she accepts.

The cold is just seeping between the cracks of Bern a month before her birthday when she boards a plane headed for Gibraltar. The base is derelict, and it's once laughter-filled halls seem to close in around Angela, the ghosts of her former companions haunting her every step. Once she is settled in, Winston introduces her to the new recruits, including Fareeha Amari, and although they met once many years back, Angela finds herself feeling refreshed by the slightly familiar yet somehow entirely new presence.

She is stood on the runway one day, surrounded by drifting snow and rusted vehicles, when Fareeha invites Angela to fly with her, and Angela will be damned if she doesn't dominate the sky like it's her home, a falcon in the breeze. The wind ricochets inside her ribcage until she can feel it vibrating in her bones. She forgets all about the mark on her wrist, and thinks this is probably what it feels like to be free.

Time moves faster than it did before, and suddenly she's spending more time at the base, and in turn more time with Fareeha.

Fareeha is young and wonderful and bright, like the world hasn't gotten its claws in her yet, and Angela doesn't think it ever will. Fareeha is just indestructible like that, fearless like Angela wishes she could be. In the dry, cutthroat wasteland that this world is, Fareeha is like an oasis on the horizon; sometimes, Angela still doesn't know if she's real or just a mirage, waiting to be swept away from her reach.

Fareeha is good for her, in ways she'll never be able to fully express. She's like a breath of fresh air in the acrid environment they live in, and she lets Angela catch glimpses of her version of the world, reminding her how simple things can be.

Angela wants to get a haircut, Fareeha tells her to do it. Angela thinks she might like to have a life somewhere new, Fareeha encourages her to go for it. Angela wants to go on a road trip, Fareeha asks if she can come too. When they hug, Angela doesn't even pause at the sight of the mark on Fareeha's wrist, the white dove inconspicuous, and the idea of soulmates seems completely irrelevant when she's with her.

Emboldened by the last couple of months, and proud and certain in the new her, a version of herself who's brave and free and invincible, Angela takes the trip to visit her grandparents in Bern, and she asks her grandmother to tell her the truth. They cry buckets of tears between them, and share hugs and reassurances and I love you's.

"It's not as if she didn't love him," she tells Angela, eyes shiny with tears. "She loved your father more than anything, and she knew he loved her too." She tucks a strand of Angela's hair, short like Fareeha's now, behind her ear. "Sometimes that's enough; to love and be loved."

The sun shines, vivid and warm, through the window, and the room glows golden, and Angela remembers, for the first time in years, how beautiful the world can be.

Gibraltar is teetering between winter and summer, the last of the cold weather blowing through the city in spring, when Angela realises she hasn't thought about the mark on her wrist in more than three months.

She made a resolution at the beginning of the year that she wouldn't check the media outlets obsessively for news about her and the other Overwatch members like she's done every year for nearly the last decade.

Stopped short in the kitchen of her rented apartment, Angela has to check to make sure the sun, bright and yellow, is still there. For once in her life, seeing it on her left wrist where it should be, as if it wasn't already strange enough, gives her a foreign and odd sense of relief.

Thinking about it now, Angela wonders if she is less concerned with the mark because she's been so happy recently, even without it and everything that it entails. Of course, she wouldn't mind meeting her soulmate, but that would just be the cherry on top of the veritable mountain of happiness Angela has experienced in the last few months. As wonderful as having her soulmate would be, Angela is content with what she has now, and that's enough for her.

Someone bangs on the door to her apartment, and Angela smiles wide and bright, nearly skipping to go answer it. She swings the door open excitedly, and Lena stands on the threshold, hunched up in her coat.

"Thank god, I don't know how I'm so cold, I must be coming down with something because the way you're dressed is telling me it's not fucking freezing outside," the shorter girl says, lips trembling and air whistling between her chattering teeth. Lena pauses at the sight of Angela in front of her, eyes narrowing at the set of her white teeth, bared in her smile.

Angela laughs, loud and carefree. "What are you talking about? It's so sunny!"

"It's just so great," Angela gushes, having told the other girl about her realisation now that they're both settled in front of her coffee table, a tin of cookies and two mugs between them. Lena clutches hers to her chest, steam wicking off the surface of her hot chocolate. "I don't remember the last time I've felt like this."

Lena hums, her legs tucked beneath her. "Why do you think that is?" she asks curiously.

Angela's cat Poehler scampers into the room, jumping onto the table and standing on her haunches. "What a silly creature, she looks like a meerkat" She laughs as she scrambles for her phone on the arm of the couch to commemorate the moment.

Lena rolls her eyes at the other girl's antics. She waits until Angela has taken her pictures; plural—before broaching the subject again. "Angela?"

"Hm?" Angela replies absentmindedly, typing away at her phone. "Right, sorry." She locks her phone and sets it aside. "What did you say?" She grins sheepishly. Lena rolls her eyes again.

"I asked you why you think that is." When Angela's face doesn't register any sign of recognition, Lena gestures with her hand. "You know, why do you think you're so happy now? How come it's not like...before?" she whispers hesitantly.

Angela smiles reassuringly. "I don't know. I think it's a culmination of a lot of things. The fact I have my own lab now is great as it means I can carry out my research as I wish. I have a bunch of great friends." She reaches out to squeeze Lena's delicate hand. "Life is just really great right now," Angela continues, looking around her quaint apartment. "Choosing to stay situated at the Gibraltar base was a good choice too, I think. A fresh start, with my own space, where I can help when I'm needed." Angela sighs softly. "It's incredible. I know you know how much I used to struggle with everything," she says. "Here, it all just disappears. Every worry I've ever had.

"It's the soulmate thing, too," she adds. "I used to be so preoccupied with finding mine, like I thought I needed to, to be able to live my life to the fullest. But everything's just so bright and... it's like the sun never stops shining here." Poehler's ears perk. Angela rolls her eyes at herself. "Which is kind of ridiculous, considering the disparity in weather between Bern and Gibraltar, but." She shrugs.

Lena raises an eyebrow. "Right," she drawls. "I've noticed how much happier you've been since moving." Her eyes flit quickly to a picture frame over Angela's shoulder, then back again before the other girl can notice. "You were deciding between here and somewhere else, weren't you?"

"Yeah," Angela responds absently. Her eyes are downcast, focused on her hands, as she plays with the younger girl's fingers. "Decided on here, in the end. A big change never hurts, you know?"

"Right, right," Lena mumbles again, thoughtful. She chooses her next words carefully, tone deliberately casual. "Hey, Fareeha is currently stationed here too, isn't she? I haven't had chance to catch up with her yet, how is she?"

The smile that graces Angela's face unthinkingly is so sweet that Lena's teeth ache at the sight of it, and she bites down on the grin threatening to break out on her face. Dust motes hover in the air, suspended in the sunlight surrounding them; Angela's eyelashes, sweeping low, seem to burn white like little feathers as she plays with Lena's fingers in her lap, intertwining them with hers. The heart on Lena's wrist, shaped almost like an infinity sign, sits in stark relief on her skin, but Angela doesn't even notice it.

"She's amazing," Angela says softly, completely absorbed in her own thoughts. She doesn't notice the way Lena smiles, eyes crinkling at the corners. "I love her," she whispers. "You guys definitely need to catch up soon, hasn't changed a bit mind you, stoic as ever but she is absolute sunshine," Angela says, finally looking up to beam at Lena.

Lena bursts into laughter, high and tinkly like chimes, and Angela thinks the sound is perfect in this brave new world of hers, so she laughs too, riding all kinds of highs. "What's so funny?"

The room is small and comfortable, and the mugs have cooled down on the coffee table, but Lena's hands are warm in Angela's, and the world seems a little less cold. She considers, for a moment, telling her everything, but she looks again at the photo of Angela and Fareeha over the blonde girl's shoulder, and then back at the radiant girl in front of her, and decides not to; not now.

"Nothing," she says instead. "I'd love to."

"Come on, Angela! It wasn't that bad."

Angela lifts her head from the hardwood floor she's been laying face down on for the past five minutes and gives the other girl a withering glare.

Fareeha laughs loudly, neck stretched and glistening with sweat. "Well, okay. It wasn't exactly easy," she concedes, extending her right hand to help Angela up. The medic grasps it tightly, before promptly pulling Fareeha down onto the floor with her. The other girl's body shakes with her laughter and the back of her head bangs worryingly against the ground, but she only giggles even harder.

In the afternoon light shining through the wall of glass, Fareeha's smooth skin seems to reflect a spectrum of gold and white, and the sunlight crowns her raven black hair, the colour seeping out of it completely, cheeks flushing like blooming flowers in contrast; Angela thinks she looks ethereal. Fareeha's head lolls to the side, and she smiles at Angela for a long, blissful moment. Her grin widens devilishly, and her eyebrows arch sharply, before she surges forward and rubs her sweaty face against Angela. The blonde shrieks, shrinking away from her and pushing her head away roughly. "No! Stop, stop, stop! Fareeha!"

The taller girl's eyes narrow and crinkle up with her smile, and she sticks her tongue out. "That's what you get."

Angela rolls her eyes. "Your workouts are a cruel and unusual punishment," she says dryly, "you deserved it." She pauses. "Also, you laughed at me."

It's Fareeha's turn to roll her eyes. "It wasn't that bad!" she repeats indignantly. "Anyway, you'll get used to it." She gets up and holds out her hand again.

Angela grabs it in earnest and Fareeha hoists her up like she weighs nothing. She sighs melodramatically. "Only for you, Amari."

"Oh, Lena was here the other day, and I was saying how you guys should meet up again soon," Angela tells Fareeha excitedly as she stands at the stove in her kitchen. The aroma of Fareeha's shampoo swirls around the room among the scents of dinner, and the flowers in the vase on the counter by her fridge; dahlias, some of Fareeha's favourites.

She hears Fareeha hesitate behind her. "Is it silly that she intimidates me a little?" Angela turns to give Fareeha an amused look before focusing on the food again. "It's just that she's one of your oldest and closest friends, and I really want her to like me but whenever I hang out with her I feel like I'm messing it all up. Right of passage, you know? Parent's approval," Fareeha elaborates.

"Is Lena my mother in this situation?" Angela asks, facing Fareeha now, who only stares back; unamused. "Lena's a teddy bear, honestly. She's half your height." Fareeha grumbles, and Angela grins as she rubs a comforting hand along her bicep. "Honest. She wants to hang out with you."

"Really?" Fareeha asks reluctantly.

"Really. I mean, my glowing recommendation was obviously a contributing factor," she continues. Fareeha rolls her eyes. "No seriously, I was telling her how much I loved you. Who

wouldn't," Angela adds without thought, "you're complete sunshine." She continues to rub Fareeha's arm, before the mark on her left wrist catches her attention like a beacon. She stares for a moment, vaguely confused. Slowly, Angela's insides turn to ice, and she dazedly lets her hand drop like stone.

"Thanks Angela," Fareeha whispers tenderly, the corners of her lips curling upwards.

Angela doesn't see, eyes still focused on the sun on her wrist as her face drains of colour, and she looks as though she's just seen a ghost. "Yeah," she replies shakily, "no—no problem."

Things change so suddenly that Angela doesn't even notice. Or maybe she just wasn't paying attention and that's why this seems to come at her like a ton of bricks.

It's like, one moment, everything's fine, research is going great, talon haven't done anything worthy of note in a while, and she moved to Gibraltar because Fareeha—

Well. Maybe Angela really should have paid a bit more attention.

So much for not thinking about soulmates.

When she was younger, Angela adored Cinderella, because even though the prince doesn't have anything on his wrist to guide him, no marking of fire or ashes, or mice and glass slippers, he knows that she's the one for him.

In some stories, people don't have marks to help them find their soulmates. But in the stories and the movies, people still end up together like it's meant to be, and they find love that's perfect for them, even though they don't have any symbol to tell them that they're two halves of a whole. Angela never used to think that was very realistic. It's probably hard, to find your soulmate when there's nothing on your wrist to tell you what's right.

And anyway, it helps you pick and choose, to narrow down candidates, so you don't have to waste your time going after people that your symbol, no matter how much you wish it, could ever be for.

The topic of soulmates never really comes up between them. Probably because Angela knows how it feels to be picked apart by people asking insensitive questions, and she doesn't want that for anyone. Also, Fareeha is sweet and caring like that, and she's probably heard of the way Angela used to tear herself up over it, and doesn't want to contribute to that in any way.

It's a Saturday afternoon and they're in her kitchen when Angela brings it up. The sun shines bright through the open windows, washing her floors almost entirely white, and the oven is still warm from the cookies cooling on the counter. She tries to be as subtle as she possibly can,

feigning indifference, but she hangs onto Fareeha's words like they're the only thing keeping her from drowning.

"Must be nice to have found your soulmate," she says in a wistful tone, watching the other girl. From the corner of her eye, she sees Fareeha freeze, a cookie suspended in front of her mouth. "It's been three years, right?"

Fareeha looks nervous and uncomfortable, and Angela feels awful, but she wants to hear this, so she soldiers onwards. "Right," she murmurs, eyes downcast. She begins to break the uneaten cookie in her hand into pieces.

"What's her mark?" Angela asks, watching Fareeha's fluttering eyelashes. "I mean, if you want to tell me," she hastens to add, hesitating at the sight of the crumbling dessert in front of her. "I was just wondering what symbol you—"

"No, it's fine," Fareeha interrupts. "Um. Val has a bow tie on her wrist," she says. The bracelets on her arm jangle together, and she seems to rub the skin underneath almost unconsciously.

"Mm," Angela hums pensively. Fareeha stares at the mess she's made, head lowered. "I think you're more of a white shirt and blazer kind of girl, but a bow tie is nice, too."

Fareeha's head whips up, brown eyes wide. There's a surprised look on her face, and for a moment, she stares. Angela looks back innocently. Outside the window, a car horn beeps, urging another to go.

Fareeha smiles slowly, and she laughs softly. "Yeah, I think so, too."

"I know she's not the one," Fareeha tells her later. "So does Val. It's just...comfortable. We're just waiting for the right people to come along," she finishes, picking up another cookie. Angela's mood plummets, and she suddenly becomes very interested in the woodwork of the table.

"Right," Angela mutters.

Fareeha shows her the white dove, and she can't help the surge of jealousy. Once, she would have wanted a symbol like that. There's someone out there, someone beautiful and pure and good, waiting for Fareeha. But all she can think is how much she wishes it was something else; a caduceus, maybe, a safety pin; even a mug of coffee would have been fine.

Like a switch has been flipped, Angela becomes consumed, again, by the concept of soulmates and the mark on her wrist.

Except, this time, it's different.

Now, when she's out with her friends or visiting her family, she doesn't look at the marks on people's wrists anymore. Angela doesn't check the media outlets for articles about the yellow sun on her wrist.

No, what she does is worse. Instead, Angela thinks about the white dove on Fareeha's, and fantasises about what it would be like if it was meant for her.

And it's generic, it could mean anything. But she wants so much for the sun on her skin to mean Fareeha, to mean the warm pumping of her blood through her veins when she's with her, the radiant shine of her smile, the burning heat of Fareeha's hand in hers.

In hindsight, she thinks her father had it all wrong, that afternoon he looked like a silver angel. He was in the same position as Angela is now; they could only dream and wonder and wish, and be completely and totally wrong.

She had lived by her father's words for so much of her life, and only now does she really consider how baseless and meaningless they are. He'd said something sad and meek, like people are broken all their lives, except they don't realise it until they meet their soulmates.

It's not like that for Angela.

It's like she wishes she were broken, like she wishes a piece was missing so she could have Fareeha complete her.

It's only later she realises that she doesn't have to be incomplete for Fareeha to make her whole.

It makes her feel so despicable, but sometimes, for one vulnerable moment, Angela wishes Fareeha would stay with Val forever. That she would never meet her soulmate, so that Angela could have her forever, too.

It's disgusting, and Angela always feels physically sick afterwards to the point where her eyes water with whatever is threatening to claw up her throat, and it feels as though an anvil is pressing down on her chest. She remembers then that even if Fareeha found that undefinable happiness, Angela would still have her, the way they are now, because Fareeha is lovely and wonderful and not despicable like her.

And that's when Angela wishes more than anything that Fareeha would find her soulmate, find that happiness, more than Angela has ever wished it for herself.

The problem isn't that Fareeha's taken and Angela isn't her soulmate. No, that's totally fine. Fareeha isn't what's wrong about the situation here. It's Angela. It's that she's still achingly happy; Angela's life is still perfect, and she wishes, she wishes, she wishes, for the first time in her life, that that wasn't the case.

This time, she's in London and the sun is beating down on her back as she makes her way to the building. Angela storms up to the front door and bangs on it until it opens, Lena looking up at her expectantly on the other side. Angela didn't tell her anything when she asked if she could come over, only that she really needed to talk to her. For an instant, the only sound that can be heard is the taller girl's shallow pants, and her skin shines faintly with the sheen of her sweat. The air conditioning in Lena's home blows through the doorway, and Angela shivers minutely.

Lena pulls her in and locks the door, sitting her down on the couch in her living room. She watches Angela's face for a moment, until it crumbles into a weak and sad smile. Lena's face turns sympathetic. "I'm sorry, Angela," she whispers, arms coming up to envelop the taller girl.

The sad thing is, Angela can never really be disappointed, because Fareeha already makes her so happy.

She'd said once that having her soulmate would only be the cherry on top of the immense happiness she already experiences day to day. Angela had admitted that she already asks for more from the world than she really deserves.

Angela has had her share of warmth; it's unfair to ask for it to be sunny all the time.

As they always do, things get better. August passes painfully slow, then September is easier, and October rolls around in a flurry of preparations for a new bunch of recruits set to join the ever-growing Overwatch team.

Other than getting a lot busier, nothing really changes. Angela's life is nothing if not based on routine; her weeks are filled with research, patching up the recruits who got a little too brave in the sparring matches, and promoting. With Overwatch's reformation long having been public knowledge, the senior members had deemed it necessary they spread words of positivity about their work, and their goals for the future. The interviewers Angela had met with had been open-minded, asking about her friends and her life as an empowered woman, and her mark doesn't come up in an interview question even once. She still continues to spend time with Fareeha any opportunity she gets, and although she never stops vehemently wishing for the sun on her wrist to mean the other girl, she becomes okay with the idea that it doesn't. What had her grandmother said? To love and be loved. Angela would make that enough for her.

The landing strip at the airport in London is dry and cracked, and the sun is perched high in the sky when Angela descends the steps of her private jet.

The weather is practically freezing in comparison to Gibraltar in Winter; Angela had to don her winter clothing on the plane. Once her heels click on the asphalt, she is quickly ushered into the backseat of an SUV, and the tinted windows block out the light. She's eager for re-group at the London base, but that's not until tomorrow, so she directs her driver to her hotel.

The ride over is peaceful and quiet, and Angela watches the city streak by through the window. She remembers again why she once wanted to be stationed at the base here; London is beautiful with its posh streets and buildings, and the city is alive with people. And then she thinks of all the reasons why she didn't, and of Fareeha who just wouldn't have it, and suddenly she misses home and the bustle of a different city. She misses her living room and her cat and the girl who seems to always be present in her kitchen.

As if on cue, Angela's phone vibrates with a text from Fareeha, and she scrambles to read it, a grin on her face.

Tomorrow, she thinks; Angela will get to see her and spend time with her tomorrow, and the day after, and every day that Fareeha will have her.

There aren't many things that can top last year's Overwatch regrouping on Angela's list of perfect days, given everything that happened on that occasion, from meeting Fareeha again, to flying through the sandy skies with her soon after, but this year's meeting comes pretty close.

Fareeha; now Captain Amari, is utterly breathtaking, and not just because she's so beautiful, although Angela is definitely not blind to that fact, but because she's so confident and strong and free. She walks into the room of recruits, filled with old and new faces alike, as if it's her domain, and it's such an honour for Angela to be right beside her while she's doing it.

Under all the uniform and armour, it doesn't matter that the mark on her skin is for someone else. It doesn't matter that, somewhere out there, they have soulmates waiting for them because, here and now, they have each other, and nothing else in the world seems to matter.

It's hard to imagine that they only met a year ago, and Angela doesn't believe in fairytales anymore, and hasn't for a long time now, but it's like they've come full circle; they walked into this separately, and now they're coming out of it hand in hand, and there's something just a little magical about that.

They're sitting in a common room in the London base, surrounded by fellow team members and civilians alike, cheers in high spirits and songs of good praise bouncing from wall to wall as Reinhardt leads a merry dance around the outlines of the room. It had been less than an hour since Winston had announced the news of the Government's decision to begin funding Overwatch once more, and it had taken no time for the bottles to be popped open and the celebrations to begin.

Angela and Fareeha had quickly turned their noses up at the offers of drink, and settled themselves in the corner amongst Lena and a few of the new recruits, who were fondly exchanging gushing compliments with the girl.

"I know I may mock you at times, Lena. But what they're saying is nothing short of the truth, you're honest, and kind-natured, and I can't thank you enough for all you've done for me." Angela says, patting Lena on the head teasingly as she does.

Lena brushes her shoulders and scoffs jokingly, "Alright, alright. There's only so much cheesiness a girl can take, if you're going compliment anyone from now on, keep it to one word."

"One word, I sense a challenge," Angela says. "I know yours," she says, turning to Fareeha, "yours is sunshine." It's no surprise, not even to Fareeha, and her thank you is heartfelt and genuine.

But then she says, "Yours, yours would be good. It seems simple I know, but there's nothing

more fitting, you're a good person. You're true, and pure, and you've been a beacon of hope and peace to everyone in the dark times we've faced."

Fareeha pauses only for a moment, face perturbed, and if Angela didn't pay attention to Fareeha the way she does, she would have missed the hesitance that slips its way into her voice.

"I mean, let's face it, if I'm a falcon, you're a dove," and—

Oh.

It's not a fairytale; of course not, it never has been. When soulmates meet for the first time, they don't fall in love just like that. The first time they touch, there is no spark, no jolt, no premonition. Angela stopped believing in those stories a long time ago.

But she swears that the sun on her wrist burns.

"Look," Fareeha says, head turned, eyes downcast. "I don't—I know it's not like that, I know you don't—"

She stops, looks up, eyes vivid and dark. The smile on her face is small, sweet, not sad or bitter, and her sincerity makes Angela's heart ache. "It's wishful thinking. Sometimes it's just nice to think that it means you." Fareeha laughs softly at herself, embarrassed. Her left hand comes up to run through her hair, and Angela can just barely see the white dove peeking through her gold bracelets. "I didn't mean to spring that on you, please believe me when I say I didn't, it just slipped out. Words really aren't my thing," she says, grinning softly at the reference.

When the silence extends, she reaches out and brushes the bangs out of Angela's eyes before her hand slides down Angela's arm to clutch her hand, and she crouches so that they're face to face. The touch leaves scorching trails along Angela's skin. Her fingers skirt the mark on her wrist. "Angela? I'm sorry, please don't worry about it at all. You don't have to do anything. You can forget about it if you like." And god, how can she be so oblivious, how can she not see? How can she not remember the words Angela said a moment before Fareeha said hers, the words she's been saying for months.

"I don't want to forget," Angela intones lowly, finally responding.

Fareeha's face crumples minutely, as if she's trying to hold back her reaction. "Oh," she says. "I didn't—well I didn't think you'd—care so much." She turns away, her smile completely gone now. "I fucked up. God, I've ruined it," she mutters. Fareeha pulls her hand away and stands up, as if the touch burns, and isn't that ironic.

She is still murmuring quietly to herself when Angela gets up and steps forward so that they're nearly nose to nose, her voice harder, nearly a growl, when she says, "Fareeha." The girl's head snaps up, and her eyes are strained and worried, face pinched.

"Look, Angela," she says, voice hurried and anxious now, hands gesturing wildly before her, but without touching Angela. Her eyes jump around frantically, never settling on the blue in front of her. "I didn't mean to, okay? Nothing has to change. Nothing at all. Please don't let anything change, I—"

Angela grabs both of Fareeha's hands, the fingers of her right hand snaking underneath the bracelets on Fareeha's left wrist, stroking the white dove there. Fareeha stops speaking promptly, mouth clamping shut, and her lips part slightly, eyes wide as if in awe. Angela continues to rub the soft skin of Fareeha's wrist, and everything around them fades to white noise.

The movement of Angela's fingers stops and, slowly, her hands drift up along Fareeha's arms, skimming her neck underneath the collar of her shirt. Fareeha takes a long, shuddering breath, before the blonde's hands tangle in the hair at the back of her neck, and they both move forward in a motion so seamless, Fareeha downwards as Angela reaches up.

The kiss is soft and sure, their lips touching and parting and coming together again and again. Fareeha's hands find Angela's waist, and then her ribs, her shoulders, her cheeks. They kiss for a long time, until the sun is low in the winter sky and the room turns dusky.

Finally, Fareeha pulls away, letting her forehead rest gently against Angela's and they stay like that for a moment. Fareeha laughs breathlessly, as if she still can't believe what just happened, and Angela joins in, the sound of their laughter harmonious.

The sun sets fully, the room darkening out but for the city lights glimmering faintly through the window; her skin is warm where Fareeha's hands rest and she can just see the little flecks of light reflecting off of her eyes, and Angela thinks the room is bright and lovely with the sun standing in front of her.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!